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II. *The first week ; Confinement Period.*

From the day of birth till the moment when the umbilical cord falls, seven days may elapse : this forms a special period called *busahana*, which is the period of confinement for both mother and child. It will be concluded by the special ceremony of the child's first outing, marked by the rite of the broken pot. During these seven or eight days, *the mother* is restricted to a special diet, and this is a true "marginal period" for her. She is absolutely outside the pale of society. The diet is prescribed by the family doctor, who knows how to treat children, and consists of a special dish prepared with Kafir corn (1) (mabele) and called *shimhimbi*, with which special medicines have been mixed. The aim of this medication (khwebela busahana) is twofold : first to expel the unclean blood which follows the birth, and which is a very great taboo, and secondly to stimulate the production of the milk. This food is cooked in a special pot (shikhwebelo sha busahana) and is eaten not with the hands, as some particles of the unclean blood might enter it and cause the mother to become phthisic, but with a special spoon.

Both the pot and the spoon will be fastened over the entrance of the hut, inside (shirangen sha nyangwa), at the end of this period of seclusion.

A fowl is also killed during these first days, a hen if the child is a girl, a cock if it is a boy. Some medicinal powder is poured into the broth, and the mother drinks it and eats part of the meat, the husband eating the remainder. This little luxury is indulged in as it helps the mother to recover her strength sooner ; she is attended to by her own mother, who has been summoned as soon as the birth has been satisfactorily effected, and who helps her to feed the child.

(1) This use of Kafir corn in this and other old rites proves the antiquity of this cereal. It is probably the first which was known to the Natives. Maize is quite a modern food amongst the Thongas, though the time of its introduction is not known. See Part IV.

685 857 Generally speaking the elder boys send the younger to commit these thefts, and the plunder is enjoyed by the whole company. They threaten to beat them if they return empty-handed. A sad fate for the youngsters—blows on all sides ; blows from the owners of the fields if they are caught, blows from their comrades if they bring nothing back with them!

Here are one or two tricks employed by the little thieves. In order to take a water-melon (khalabatla) out of a field without being noticed by the women who are busy pulling up their ground nuts, they cut the stalk and fasten it to a piece of string. The other end of this is attached to the leg of the thief, who moves away slowly, drawing the water-melon after him. When he is out of reach of the women, he hastily puts it under his arm and makes off at top speed.

To catch a hen without its making a sound, they dig a little hole behind the huts of the village, and put a few grains of maize in it. The fowl puts its head into the hole to eat the grains, and immediately the little rascal who was watching from behind a bush, rushes out, seizes it by the neck and carries it off before it can utter a single cry!

672 685 The penalty when a boy is caught is a good whipping without a fine. "Psa batjongwana ! It is an action of little boys !" These minor thefts are not considered serious.

3) Catching game.

262 203 857 Hunger is the constant companion of these boys, who do not get enough to eat at home. It is true they ate to their heart's content (shura) yesterday evening, but this morning they had only a very scanty breakfast (fihluta). They try to satisfy their never satisfied appetite by catching game : not big game of course, as they have no real weapons, but birds, field-mice, eggs in the nests (the less fresh they are, the better, because there is more meat inside!) etc. To get birds they throw their sticks at them, and are very clever at killing a partridge as it rises heavily from the grass ; or they make traps with a flexible stick to which they tie a string with a bait. They bend the stick, set the trap by means

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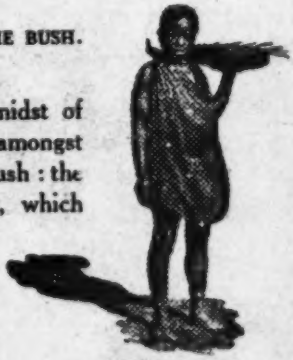
of a little bit of wood, and when the bird puts its beak into the bait, it is caught round the neck by the string. On the borders of the lake of Rikatla, boys used to catch even big birds with these traps. They set many kinds of snares. One is a cage made of sticks of palm marrows which shuts automatically when a bird enters and eats the grain by which it has been attracted. They sometimes build two walls of sticks planted in the soil and converging to the same point, where they reach a little door provided with the trap. Hares are sometimes caught in this way. They follow the wall, and when they go through the door, they tread on a hurdle which is connected with a bent rod : the rod springs back and the hare is caught.

4) Learning the science of the bush.



Phot. G. Liengme.
A Thonga boy.

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This life in the velt, always in the midst of Nature, develops the power of observation amongst the boys. They know everything in the bush : the big Psyche caterpillar (Eumeta cervina), which hangs from the nembe-nembe shrub (Cassia petersiana) like a little bundle of sticks, and which they call *mahambanindlwane*, "the one who walks with his house;" the big Carabid beetle which appears with the first rain, the Anthia alveolata, marked with large hollows on the elytra and which is therefore named "the son of the smallpox." Indeed I found in Rikatla a boy who knew that a certain white cocoon found on the branches of the nkanye tree (Sclerocarya caffra) gives birth to the splendid green Queen Moth (Argema Mimosae).

[262]
Having collected beetles and butterflies extensively for years, I have had an opportunity of recognizing the power of observation of these boys, who were my best hunters! Of course they particularly appreciate things edible... especially the *shitambela*, a big Bupresta beetle which they roast and suck.

In their country there

524 are big nasty yellow-brown hornets (a kind of Belonogaster)
136 which build more or less circular nests, sometimes attaining to the size of a man's head. On a certain day the boys decide to make war on these enemies. They make shields with the leaves of the *nala* palm tree which they plait together.

524 They cut down branches, which they wave to protect themselves, and one of them goes and strikes a heavy blow on the wasps' nest! The irritated insects rush out on their assailants and sting them. The boys try to kill the wasps with their sticks or to crush them when they light on them. Sometimes, overcome by the pain, they run away; sometimes, resisting to the last, they kill and exterminate their winged enemies.

Besides this there are also *big battles between the shepherds* of the different flocks. The shepherds amuse themselves by taking one another's cattle. Those who are the strongest bring the stolen herd triumphantly back to the neighbourhood of their village, but they would never let it enter the kraal. The vanquished call to their help their elder brothers, who come to recover their property and, if they can, give the thieves a sound thrashing!

576 Insults and fights are frequent between the clans. The boys
762 of Mpfumu call out to those of Matjolo: " Forest gadders! Eaters
291 of snails and boas, of lizards and tortoises " (all of which are questionable food!) (In Ronga: Balala! Badi ba tihumba ni tinhlaru ni makhwahle ni tinfutchu). Those of Matjolo answer them: " Crowd of women that you are, clad in cotton material! " (Babasati! Matchimbamphela!), in reference to the fact that the inhabitants of Mpfumu, living near the town, some time ago replaced the belt of skins worn by the savages by a piece of cotton tied to the waist and hanging down to the knee (ladula).

855 The custom of frightening children with imaginary beasts is
857 wide spread amongst the Thongas. The bogey man is called
538 *Shingomu-Ngomu* or else *Shikunkununu*, and by this very expressive
861 word they designate a huge and mighty being who walks, swaying his big body from right to left, with a sound like *ngomu-ngomu*. The ogre is *Shitukulumukumba*, a word coming originally from the Zulus, which corresponds to the Ronga *Nwambilutimhokora*, that is to say: " the one who has scales on the heart. " He eats

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hut and tie the bag round his neck. What remains of the *timhoroia* will be used to smear the hut. Then all the girls will love him ; or in the case of a girl, she will soon be asked in marriage.

This ceremony is a characteristic *hondlola*, the same which is performed on the weaning day (see page 59) and after any serious disease ; it is a rite of removal of impurity. (Notice the termination ola, ula, ulula in these verbs ; it means generally to undo, to take away).

If the love charms do not obtain the desired result, the angry boy will perhaps try to avenge himself. He will take a fowl, or perhaps only an egg, treat it with special drugs and give it to the girl in order to bewitch her. This kind of witchcraft is called *ku dambikela*. (See the Chapter on Witchcraft, Part VI). The girl will give birth not to a child, but to an animal, a pigeon, or a snake. Or her genitalia will be changed and take the appearance of the male organ. This is one of the causes why eggs and fowls are taboo for girls.

Let us now hear from Tobane the description of the marriage rites amongst the Mpfumo clan. We shall afterwards see how the customs differ in other Ronga and Thonga clans.

II. *Marriage ceremonies of the Mpfumo clan.*

1) The betrothal (Buta).

When a young man has made up his mind to get married, and when he is in possession of the necessary lobola (1) cattle, he starts, one fine day, with two or three of his friends to look for a wife in the villages. He puts on his most brilliant ornaments and his most precious skins. Here they are, arriving in the village

1) *Ku lobola* means to buy in marriage. *Ku lobola* (a factitive derivative of the verb) is said of a father who claims a sum of money from his daughter's suitor. *Lobolo* or *ndjobolo* or *bukosi* (wealth) is the sum paid, the oxen, the hoes, or the pounds sterling. We shall use these words, which are employed in Thonga as well as in Zulu and ought to be adopted as technical ethnographic terms. I use the verb for the act of paying and the noun for the sum itself.

584 On the appointed day, they go and sit outside the village of
374 the fiancé and cough to announce their presence. The same strange proceedings begin, but this time it is the damsels who make difficulties and the young men must beg and entreat them to enter first the village, then the hut, and then to sit on the mats and to accept food. Each of the groomsmen is most attentive to the girl he chose at the preceding meeting and, to obtain her good will, he generally gives her a fowl or the equivalent in money. In the early morning the visitors rise, go and get water, warm it a little and pour it into basins before the doors of the huts, so that, on that day, the inhabitants of the village will make their ablutions with water fetched by them. Then they go and do feminine work, acting as servants of the fiancé's parents. Thus they remove the ashes from the fire-place and throw them on the ash-heap close by; they cut the wood for the young men's mothers and light the several fires of the village. They pretend to leave when the sun sets, but no one will hear of it, and they must spend another night. At last, on the following day, they go home, accompanied by the young men and again, at parting, knot grasses together. On the day of the *koroka* definite arrangements are made for the wedding.

3) Taboos of the betrothal period.

584 The two families which enter into relation with each other by
574 marriage must observe many taboos (See [illegible] II). Here are some
184 of those which are enforced during the visits of *tjekela* and *koroka*:
262 1) The visitors must not eat all the mealie corn on the spike; they must leave a few grains on it.

2) They must not tear off the leaves which are round the spike. When they have eaten all the corn, they rearrange these leaves in such a way that the cob seems not to have been touched.

3) They must not " make a hole in the pot " (bobota hotjo), viz. they leave a portion of the liquid in the beer pot, they do not empty it entirely.

4) It is forbidden to return home in rain when one has gone

584 to *tjekela*. You must wait for fine weather, otherwise it is an
574 insult to the future father-in-law.
574 5) If, during the visit, you eat monkey nuts, you must not
262 take off the thin skin which covers the kernel.

6) The suitor—the owner of the oxen—must not eat black fish that day. Only his friends have the right to do so. These fish, a kind of barbel, are to be found in the lakes (as that of Rikatla) and in the Nkomati river. The suitor will not partake of them for fear lest the girl he wishes to marry should slip through his hands like a fish. Moreover this fish is black: it might bring darkness, unhappiness.

7) Neither must he eat honey during his visit, because honey like the black fish, is slippery... Honey flows...

8) He is also forbidden to eat fowls, because cocks and hens scratch the soil with their claws, scattering it about; thus the marriage "might be scattered (*hangalasa bukati*) before it is ripe". In the Tembe clans, formerly, any solid food was taboo until the families had killed an ox for the feasts.

These taboos are not the proper taboos of a marginal period, as if the betrothal were considered as one of these periods. They are family taboos, belonging to the category of those dictated by the mutual distrust of two allied families.

585 The wedding feast consists of two parts: the *lobola feast*, viz. all the ceremonies connected with the remittance of the lobolo which takes place at the bride's village, and the *tlhoma*, viz. the bringing the bride to the bridegroom's village. Should the lobolo have been entirely paid at once, these two ceremonies will follow each other without much delay. If the sum of money or the number of oxen is not complete, the *tlhoma* will very probably be postponed.

4) Lobola feast.

a) Preparations.

585 On both sides, the friends are informed that the feast is close
273 at hand. The bride's family in particular must prepare in good time, as they have to provide the beer which will be consumed in

says: "Nsati wa mabele u nga nabele loko u nge na bukosi." — "Do not covet a woman with large breasts if you have no money..." This does not mean that she will cost more, but her father, knowing that she will not want for suitors, will not consent to let her go unless the full lobolo is paid at once. On the other hand a girl with an elongated face is admired more than one who is too broad-faced. Of the first they say: "She is pretty, she resembles an antelope" (a kota mhala); of the second: "She is chubby-cheeked, she is like a sow." A light complexion is preferred to a very dark one, because the white or yellow races are regarded as superior, and a Native laying claim to any European or Asiatic blood is proud of it. Parents, who also have their say in the question of marriage, insist on two other points; the working capacity of the girl, and the absence of any witchcraft blot in the family. Should her mother have been convicted of being a witch, the girl will be feared. However, every girl finds a husband in the land where polygamy flourishes. If he be slow in coming, she will apply to her doctor, who will prepare the *love charms*, which will make her "appear," so that she will be noticed by the boys (See page 100). If even that does not succeed, she has other means at her disposal and may go herself to make proposals to a man (wopsana). He is seduced by her, and constitutes himself a thief who has *tlhuba*, viz. "taken in marriage by abduction" (See page 119). The parents will claim the lobolo and he must pay it. Marriage and childbearing remain the only carreer to which a Thonga woman can look forward. Hence a number of special feminine taboos which are very curious.

2) Special feminine taboos.

Some of them concern girls *before childbearing* and cease after parturition. In the Tembe and Maputju clans, girls must not eat pork, because pigs root nervously with their noses; the future child would also move its head from one side to the other, when on the verge of birth, and this would make delivery difficult. Other

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other

262 animals are taboo for girls : the *hare* because it is too cunning ;
825 and the antelope *nhlengane*. This antelope raises the foot when
784 it hears a noise ; hence the idea that its leg is hollow and that
562 it perceives the sound through it. The child would do the same, if its mother were to eat the meat of the nhlengane. It would be unable to hear with its ears, only with its hands!

The *legs* of fowls (tibias) are also taboo for all women, because the hen scatters the sand... So are the *hoofs of oxen*, and *pigs' feet*. A woman eating them would walk too much... She would go everywhere to look for husbands!

784 It is taboo for a girl to *walk amongst pumpkin plants* (maranga),
562 to pluck the fruits. She is only allowed to pluck those which can
824 be reached from outside. Were she to transgress this law, she
751 would emit a bad odour, and no boy would court her. Her mother, having no fear of being despised, can walk amongst the pumpkins. A second taboo relative to pumpkins is this : unmarried women must cut a "pumpkin nose" (nhompfu) viz. the end of the stem, and fix it at their waist when plucking the pumpkins, lest they get abcesses in certain regions of their body.

784 It is taboo for them to eat cooked *oxen blood* (bubendje).
262 The following taboos apply also to *married women*. They are
562 not allowed to eat what is called *nkopfu*, viz. some parts of the
843 bowels which are cooked together with the stomach of the ox. "It would spoil the child inside." The *testicles*, which are generally given to the uterine nephew when the meat is distributed according to the laws, and the *underlip* of any animal are also forbidden to them. So is also the *tongue*... because it is reserved for old people as a mark of respect! The *rectum* (gobana) is taboo for women and children. Children might make unseemly noises from the rectum! Women must abstain from *porcupine* and *monkeys' flesh* ; all their offspring would resemble these animals. Such cases have happened, it is said! Women must not eat *eggs* ; they would run a double danger : their child might be born bald and remain so ; or they might be like a hen, which runs in all directions when laying an egg. They would have no peace in child bearing! (See also page 101.)

Nubile girls, during their "tiwheti," must not *approach th-*

Nubile girls during their "tiwheti" must approach the oxen *kraal* and look at them. The cattle might suffer, be attacked by a bad cough (mukhulwane), get thin! This taboo is instituted to protect the oxen, not the human inhabitants of the village, as D. Kidd says is the case amongst the Zulus. (Part IV. Ch. I. E.) When women have passed the time of child-bearing, most of the taboos cease, and they can eat monkeys and porcupine if they wish!

3) The first year of married life.

I shall not return to the subject of marriage rites, which have been fully explained in the preceding chapter. Let me say that, though a Thonga woman cannot imagine life without marriage (ku kandja bukati), she does not enter on the new state with any enthusiasm. Her parents have warned her that she will be illtreated, accused of witchcraft and adultery, etc. Her sisters bewail her fate on her wedding day in song. The fact that she has been paid for, though it does not constitute an actual sale, puts her in an inferior position (See Part II).

During the first year, she has no *ndangu*, viz. no fire-place of her own. She cooks for her mother-in-law. During the three first weeks the husband eats with her and with the girl who accompanied her to her new home. Afterwards, he goes back to eat with the men. In some places it would seem that the husband eats with her the whole year, until she has her own pot (hlembeto).

4) Husband and wife.

What are the relations between husband and wife after the honey-moon? Of course they vary very much according to the character of both. As a rule however, the married people have very little intimacy with each other; the man remains with his companions on the "bandla," the village square where they meet, and only occasionally comes into the "ndangu," the reed enclosure of the fire-place, which is the true domain of the

777 from you... In the same manner, do not prepare the skin for
784 the child before it is born. Your wife would not bring forth a human being. Should you transgress this rule, you would bring misfortune on yourself (wa tihlolela, wa singita), and on your family. If you go to Moneri (the missionary) and ask him for a skin for this purpose before the birth of your child, he will tell you it is so." Note the deep-rooted conviction of the old heathen, who appeals to the authority of the missionary to strengthen the taboo!

585 10. Later on, when you are married, you must avoid eating
784 honey with your wife for a whole year, till she has had a child.
777 The bride is allowed to eat honey at her parent's home, but not in
262 her new domicile and with her husband. The husband can eat it in the bush, but he must wash his hands when he comes back, lest his wife should notice it. She would run home if she knew of it. We have already met with this prohibition in the tjekela visit, and heard the reason for it : honey flows ; the bride would go! The explanation now given is this : honey is too sweet, and your bride is too sweet also. (Is it not your honey-moon or honey-year ?) The two things do not go together. (Psa yalana, they hate each other.) A third reason is this : Bees, when they have eaten their honey, fly away from the hive. So would your wife do... After a year this misfortune is no longer to be feared.

606 This last idea is very curious. It shows that the bukoñwana
581 taboos *decrease in severity as time passes*. The strained relations between the son-in-law and his wife's mother also become easier. He begins to call her mamana, and she calls him ñwana. This transformation even goes so far that in some cases a mukoñwana can go and dwell in his parents-in-law's village, especially if he has children and if the children are grown up. And this fact gives us the natural explanation of these curious rules.

Marriage, as we have seen, is not an individual affair in the collective stage of family life. It is a contract made between two groups, which enter by it into a special relation towards each other. This relation is fraught with danger, because the interests of both groups are involved ; a bride and bridegroom are inspired with a mutual feeling of fear, knowing that an

643 619 seems to have been particularly feared. He had even bought poison from white people and is said to have killed his rival, Musongi, chief of the Maputju clan, with whom he fought the battle of Malangotiba in 1870. He sent a woman of bad life to Maputju. The woman succeeded in winning the confidence of the king and poured this poison into his glass. Nowadays the Ronga chiefs have been taught by the Authorities to sit in council when discussing matters.

643 The two principal prerogatives of the chief are the right of *luma* and taxation.

III. *The right of luma, and the first fruits rites.*

181 241 We come to a set of rites which might be dealt with when considering the Agricultural life, but I prefer to describe them here, as they provide us with a typical illustration of the constitution of the clan ; they are highly characteristic of the Bantu community, a community which is essentially agricultural in its pursuits, animistic in its beliefs, and hierarchic as regards its social and national life.

643 262 784 527 241 We have already met with the word *luma* and noticed that its ordinary meaning is *to bite* ; its ritual sense is to *remove the injurious character of a given food by a certain ceremony*. The luma is a necessity before eating the flesh of certain wild beasts, as we shall see when studying the laws of hunting (See Part IV). But it is of still more importance, and one of the great laws of the clan, that the official luma shall take place before the subjects eat the products of the new year. There seem to be two ideas at the root of this strange taboo :

1) To eat certain kinds of food is dangerous for one's health, and the first mouthful taken must be seasoned with the royal drug.

2) The gods, the chief, and elder brothers, have a prior right to enjoy the products of the soil. To precede them in doing this is a sin which would bring them misfortune. The hierarchy must be absolutely respected.

643 The law of luma seems to have applied to all kinds of food
262 in former times. Nowadays it is not observed for the following
111 products : maize, Kafir beans and peas, rice, sorghum, water
527 melons (makalabatla) and monkey nuts. It is partly observed
241 for mafureira almonds (tihuhlu), strychnos paste (fuma) and pumpkin leaves (magawane). It is strongly enforced for black Kafir corn and bukanye. Such is at any rate the case in the four clans of Nondwane, Mabota, Ñwamba and Tembe. Amongst the Zulus and Swazis on the contrary, I have been told people luma maize and do not luma kafir corn. Kafir corn is probably the most ancient cereal amongst the Ba-Thonga, and bukanye has always existed in the country. This is perhaps the reason why these luma rites, which bear a very old character, are still applied to these products to the exclusion of other more modern cereals.

I. *The luma without a religious ceremony.*

631 Let us first study the less ritualistic kind of luma, the luma
262 of the *mafureira almond*, for instance. It is practised in each
643 sub-chief's village, and, though it is tending to become obsolete,
527 it is still enforced by some "tihosana." Thus my neighbour in Rikatla, Habele, the hosana placed by Mobvesha over this part of the territory, met some time ago a boy who was eating these almonds, the description of which I shall give later on.— "Who gave them to you ?" asked Habele... The child kept silent.—"Come with me to your parents!" Having found their home, the sub-chief scolded them severely : "You have started sucking (munya) the almonds before us. You wanted to kill my head ? Pay a fine!" They answered : "The birds made them fall from the tree... The children were not guilty!" However they had to pay 500 reis.

262 The luma of almonds, which takes place in December, when
643 they are ripe, is performed in the following way. The almonds
527 are dipped into a small calabash full of water to soften them. Some of the powder of the nyokwekulu is added to them. The headman first takes some for himself and then distributes them to his people. They suck the almonds, take in their hands the part

262 643 527 which is not eaten, and rub their faces with it. But *no religious ceremony is performed.* It is the same for the *fuma*, a paste made with the contents of the kwakwa fruit, a kind of Strychnos very similar to the nsala, but of a different taste. The ceremony was even more simple than with the almonds ; the chief used to send a little of this paste to each village saying : "Let this be the first bite you swallow : the new year has come!" (Luman, ku tlhese nguba.) No powder was used in connexion with it. The magical drug was used, on the other hand, when the luma of pumpkin leaves took place.

II. *The luma of the Kafir corn.*

262 643 782 769 796 The great, the official luma, amongst the Ronga clans, is that performed for the Kafir corn (mabele). The great wife of the chief grinds the first grains of Kafir corn reaped in the fields. She cooks the flour in a pot and pours into it some of the royal powder kept in the calabash, so as to make a *shimhimbi* (See page 42). The chief takes a little of the food and offers it to the spirits of his ancestors, at the main entrance of the royal kraal. He prays to them in the following terms : "Here has the new year come! Precede us, you gods, and luma, so that, for us also, Kafir corn shall help our body, that we may become fat, not thin, that the witches may increase the corn, make it to be plentiful, so that, even if there is only a small field, big baskets may be filled! (Nguba hi yoleyi! Rangan ñwine, mi luma, ñwi Psikwembu! Na hine, mabele ma tjhama amirin yeru psinene, hi kuluka hi nga wondji. Abaloyi ba yandjisa, psi tala ngopfu, nambi shi shisi-ñwanyana shi shiñwe, a ku tale tingula!)"

262 643 796 554 609 After this religious ceremony everyone luma in turn, the chief first, then the sub-chiefs, then the counsellors, then the warriors who have killed enemies in battle, then the headmen of the kraals who have all been summoned to the capital. Should one of the headmen be prevented from coming by illness, his younger brother will not precede him. He will bring him the *shimhimbi* in a leaf ; the elder will take it, and, after him, the other brothers. Women do not eat the magic powder. Neither do strangers,

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262 643 609 796 even those who are settled in the clan. They have their own medicine and luma for themselves, though they must not do it before the chief of the country.

III. *The luma of bukanye and the great national feast.*

137 273 796 824 The most characteristic of all these ceremonies connected with the first fruits is the luma of bukanyi. Tobane has given me a circumstantial description of this feast and it deserves to be reproduced in all its details, as being a typical manifestation of Bantu national life.

The *nkanye* (1) is a large tree, one of the finest in the country. Its botanical name is Sclerocarya caffra (Sond); it is generally known amongst the English of Natal as the Kafir plum.

It bears fruit of the size of a greengage, which when ripe is a beautiful golden yellow and has a strong flavour of turpentine and a penetrating odour. It is a dioecian tree, the male bearing bunches of flowers while the female has single flowers. The Natives are quite aware of this; they cut down the male plants but take care to keep a few in each district to fecundate the female. The fruit — the kanye — begins to ripen in the month of January and falls to the ground. The odour is perceptible everywhere, and it is then that the principal men of the country approach the chief and say to him: "The time has come to luma."

In the luma of the bukanye it is easy to discover four consecutive ceremonies:

a) The luma of the gods and of the chief.

262 782 273 796 The first ripe makanye are gathered and pressed at the capital, and the sour liquor thus obtained is poured out on the tomb of the deceased chiefs in the sacred wood; they are invoked to bless this new year and the feast which is about to be celebrated.

(1) Nkanye, plural minkanye, is the tree in question. Kanye, plural makanye, is the fruit of this tree; bukanye is the drink made from this fruit. In the same way the wild apricot tree is called mphimbi, plural mimphimbi. The fruit himbi, plural mahimbi; the drink made from the fruit, bukimbi.

1: Junod M-5 (1895-1909) 1927 Thonga

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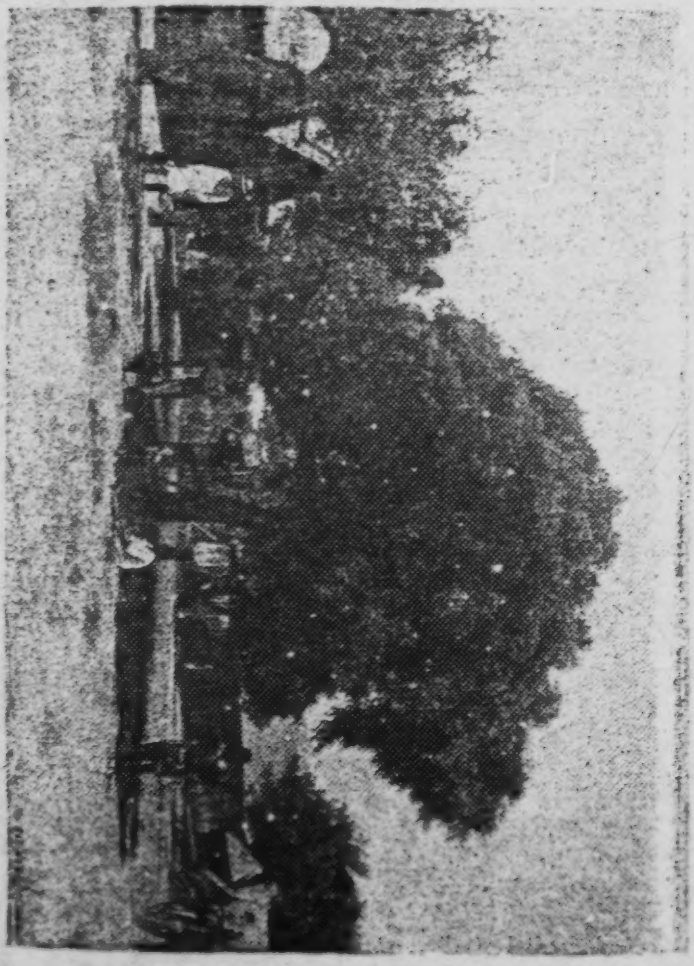
Nkolele, the sub-chief of Libombo, used on this occasion to pronounce the following prayer : "This is the new year. Let us



The "Nkanye" of Rikat', (16 miles North of Lourenço-Marques). Phot. P. Berthoud.

not kill each other! Let us eat peacefully! (Hi yo nguba! Hi nga dlayane! A hi nwenen ha hombe!)" Here is another

formula : "May this bukanyi do no harm! May we not slay each other under its influence. May it cause no serious quarrels." They are afraid that, during the general intoxication which will shortly prevail, quarrels will arise, some of which may terminate fatally. During the whole month of bukanye drinking, all business is at a standstill, just as with us all bankruptcy proceedings and all prosecutions for debt are held in abeyance for two weeks during the New Year holidays!

The gods having luma first, the bones are consulted. Should the throw be propitious, the chief will luma next ; thus the opening ceremony of the feast is concluded.

b) The luma of the army.

The young people are now assembled to clean up the public square and all the roads ; the ball room must be prepared! The women of the capital start out early in the morning, beating the *psibubutwana*, that is to say sounding the call that is produced by striking the lips (bu-bu-bu-bu), and they go all over the country gathering the golden fruit ; this is piled up in an enormous heap on the public square and the brew is proceeded with in the following manner. The makanye are pierced (tshunya) with a pointed wooden splinter ; the stone falls covered with a transparent white pulp into the jar ; into this jar is also squeezed out with the fingers all the juice which remains in the pulp adhering to the skin ; this is continued until the jar is half full, when the stones are taken out, and on the following day the pressing is resumed until the jar is full. On the third day the beer has sufficiently fermented to be pungent and agreeable to the taste and is ready for consumption. Empty barrels are easily procurable in the environs of Lourenço Marques. The women of the capital brew ten or fifteen huge casks of the precious liquor! This accomplished, the second ceremony begins.

A convocation of the entire male portion of the tribe is held in the capital, but the first to respond to the call must be the men, the warriors of the army, who come in full array, with all their ornaments, and carrying their small play shields. One cask of

539 There is quite a collection of these carriers' songs praising the chiefs. Mzila (or Muzila), whom we saw a short time back scaring sparrows, is here compared to the mythical lightning bird, to the hawk that swoops down from the clouds. (See Part VI.) Why does he not once for all annihilate the sparrows which pillage his fields of sorghum ? But this is poetry! and there is often a wide gap between poetry and reality!

d) The feasting of the chief in the villages.

796 273 643 The fourth and final act of the bukanye feasting in which, as we have seen, the chief plays a prominent part, is the *nsungi* which may be called the "fin de saison" orgy. The chief now returns the visits of his subjects and casks of beer are prepared for him in every village. Dancing and singing are in full swing. He is fêted and acclaimed! But the makanye are getting over-ripe ; a new month, a new moon is at hand, which is called *sibandlela* "she who closes the roads ;" the paths leading to the foot of the trees become almost impassable, owing to the grass which grows to an incredible height during the rains prevailing at this season. The fine weather is over. Winter is knocking at the door.

796 789 643 862 821 Amongst the Nkunas the luma ceremony called "to eat the new year" (dyaka ñwaka) is performed with a special pumpkin (kwembe) cooked at the capital together with the medicine used for rain-making. The chief first eats of it in the evening and makes the sign of a cross on the big drum, which is then beaten to call the people in his village. Then all the men come, bringing the little horns in which they keep the rain medicine (See Part VI). They eat a little and smear the rim of these horns with the medicine ; the horns also must "eat the new year." Then everybody can enjoy the products of the harvest. Should anyone precede the chief, this would be fatal to the latter or make him ill... Such is the testimony of Mankhelu. I suspect these rites to have been influenced by the proximity of the Ba-Pedi. "Now we have no longer any first fruits' feast (mulumo)," says Mankhelu with some melancholy. "White people have killed it. Everybody

262 eats freely in his house according to his good pleasure. Formerly
837 we used to take the oxen of the man who had dared to steal the
796 new year."

Conclusion on the luma rite.

796 All these luma rites[1] of first fruits seem to have primarily a *religious*
782 *origin*. The Bantus do not feel that they dare enjoy the products of
554 the soil unless they have first given a portion of them to their gods.
Is it not these gods who make the cereals grow? Have they not the power even of controlling the wizards who bewitch the fields? These rites are also evidently dictated by the *sense of hierarchy*. A subject must not precede his chief nor a younger brother the elder in the use of the new harvest, else they would kill those in authority. Such an act is against order. We shall see that, even when the seeds are sown, the elders must take precedence. But the custom seems also to have been actuated by the idea of *passage*. There is a passage from one year to another. For the Thongas, I think the new year begins
805 twice every year: it begins when tilling recommences, in July, August,
796 when the heat returns. This is the hlobo. It begins a second time at
789 harvest, and then there is passage from the food of the last year to the food of this year. This is the nguba (Ro.) or ñwaka (Dj.). Though the luma rites do not bear all the characteristics of a true passage rite, like those of circumcision or moving, we may observe in the luma of bukanye a kind of marginal period of general licence, when the ordinary laws are more or less suspended. The taking of a first mouthful probably signifies the aggregation to the new period, the magical powder used on this occasion being a protective measure to shield them from the calamities of this unknown year... And after all, is it not that feeling of fear which so easily takes possession of the heart of man when entering on a new state and starting something fresh, which has led the savage to surround the use of the first fruit with so many ritual precautions?

IV. *Taxation.*

643 The chief governs (fuma). *Fuma* means to command, but also to live in plenty, to be rich. The subject (nandja, follower) obeys; he follows the chief who marches before him just as the

1 [see pp. 394-404 in these categories or in 116-Analyst]

262 For lists of agricultural products, taboos and ceremonies connected with eating, see pp. 9-19.

D. PREPARATION OF FOOD AND DRINK.

Bantus of South Africa being mostly agriculturists are also vegetarians, not however vegetarians on principle, as they eat meat as often as they have the opportunity ; but these opportunities are rare, so that, as a matter of fact, their diet is essentially vegetable. I shall later on describe the two ways in which they procure meat, viz., cattle-breeding and hunting. Having seen what are the products of their fields, we can confidently proceed to the study of their kitchen, as meat seldom makes its appearance in the "pots on the fireplace!" 262

I. *Fire and salt.*

Thongas do not remember a time when they did not possess these two most important elements of the culinary art. 372

As regards *fire* (ndjilo, mu-mi), the Honwanas knew it before the XVth or XVIth century. The traditions reported I. p. 24 show that some clans believe that there was a time when food was not cooked.

There are four trees used to produce fire by friction (tsika) : 137

1) The *bulolo*, a kind of Hibiscus growing in the estuary of the Nkomati, in the region regularly watered by the tide, is the best *ntsiko* or wooden flint. It is a very light and soft wood and is still used near the Coast, though matches are now to be found everywhere. 372

2) The *mpahla* (mu-mi), a bush of the Compositae family, whose wood is very hard and used to make handles for hoes. It grows all over Thongaland, in the plains as well as in mountainous regions.

3) The *nkuxoa* (mu-mi), the large wild fig-tree, which covers the banks of the Nkomati and the Maputju rivers, and is common in the low lands.

231 562 841 784 men having relations with women during menstruation (I. p. 187). Should a drop of it fall in the cattle kraal, this would endanger the health of the whole herd. Women are even prohibited from passing through a herd of oxen ; they must go round it, because otherwise the death of the calves would ensue. Amongst the Ba-Ngoni this taboo is so strong that a woman guilty of having transgressed against it was put to death (1).

231 262 556 The object of oxen-breeding is not milk but the acquisition of *wealth* ; oxen mean wealth to the Native, a means of purchasing girls and of thus increasing his family. Oxen are also bred for food, the meat being highly appreciated and divided amongst all the members of the family according to the strict rules previously explained (I. p. 329). The slaughtering is done by piercing the heart with an assagai, a painful and sometimes very protracted operation. This occurs at marriage feasts, at other family and national gatherings, at the sacrifice for rain (Part VI), and on special occasions, once a year for instance, when a headman wishes to feast his people. All, even neighbours who are not relatives and travellers, are welcome to the feast. Natives have wonderful olfactory powers. They seem to smell out the *lisuna*, viz., the peculiar odour of the meat, a mile off, and when an ox has been killed you see them emerging from the bush on all sides!

234 As regards *milk*, it certainly plays a part in the food of villages which are fortunate enough to possess a well-filled oxen kraal. The *milking* of the cows presents difficulties unknown in Europe! African cows have not yet learned to submit tamely to this operation! The calf must always be allowed to suck a few mouthfuls, then a boy pulls it away from the teat and the cow consents to be milked. Should a cow be too wild, they pass a string through its

241 462 (1) We meet here with an interesting instance of a superstition having no scientific basis whatever, which is nevertheless productive of good results. Women must keep apart from oxen. Since the plough was introduced amongst South African Natives, they have been quick to notice that it is a very useful instrument, and have adopted it in many places. The plough has to be drawn by oxen and men alone are allowed to drive them. Thus women are relieved of the heavy work of tilling the fields which had been allotted to them by immemorial custom. It is probable that further knowledge will free the Natives from their old fear and from the taboo which resulted from it ; yet the idea that everything connected with oxen belongs to the domain of man will remain and thus real social progress will have been obtained through an absurd superstition !

nostrils and so keep it quiet during the whole operation. The milk is generally taken in a large wooden bowl. It is very seldom consumed as a liquid, but is *eaten* when thickened by coagulation. The fresh milk is poured into a calabash with an opening at the bottom closed by a cork : a certain quantity of whey has been kept in the calabash and this causes the fresh milk to curdle at once. When curdled but not yet set, it is called *shitjubi* and is eaten with spoons by men and women. But it is left to decompose : the whey *(mulaza)* soon separates from the thick part, which becomes entirely solid and is then called *ntjhwamba*. The cork at the bottom of the calabash is removed, the *mulaza* flows out freely and is drunk by the men and herd boys. The *ntjhwamba* is put into a plate and each man or woman, not having her *tihweti* (I. p. 187), approaches and takes a spoonful of it. A woman during menstruation must never drink milk, nor during her confinement or until her child has been presented to the moon (I. p. 52).

The milk of the first week after a cow has calved is taboo. It must not be mixed with other cows' milk, because the umbilical cord of the calf has not yet fallen off. It can, however, be boiled and consumed by children, as they do not count! After that milk is never boiled : not that there is any taboo to fear, but it is not customary. Natives do not give any clear reason for these milk taboos. They have no objection to selling their milk to strangers ; on the contrary, they are so eager to make money out of it that they often add water to it, and any European having had dealings with them in milk matters would have his story to tell!

Goat's milk is left for the herd boys ; men do not touch it.

II. *Other domestic animals.*

Besides oxen, the Ba-Ronga breed *goats* (mbuti, yin-tin), the care of which is relegated to the small boys (I. p. 62). Practically every one possesses one or more goats, whilst oxen are much more rarely met with.

The *pig*, as previously mentioned, is a new comer in the Bantu village. Its name, *nguluve*, means the wild pig. Most villages, however, possess one or two. They are never slaughtered in connection with sacrifices. 231

Poultry (tihuku) is the most common of all live stock. Not a village is without its fowl house (shihahlu) ; these are generally fashioned like a small hut and perched on piles to protect the poultry during the night from snakes. (See illustration I. p. 312.) 235 343

When a hen and her brood of young chickens have to be cared for, a much smaller hut is built on the ground, but the utmost precaution is taken to keep it almost hermetically sealed, as the mhamba (a long green snake, very venomous) and the shipyahla (Echnida arietans, a large viper resembling the puff-adder) do great execution amongst fowls! As cows are not bred for milking purposes, neither are chickens raised for the sake of their eggs. In fact Thongas consider it a sheer waste to eat eggs and always allow the hens to hatch them out. Hens are wilder than they are with us and often make their nests in the open country, returning some fine day with a flourishing young family. The breed is of very small size and the eggs are tiny ; it would require at least two to equal the weight of one ordinary egg such as are for sale in the European markets ; it is therefore evidently more advantageous to hatch eggs than to eat them! If, by any chance, a hen dies on the nest from the bite of a snake, the Natives will willingly devour the half hatched or three quarters addled eggs ; the more developed the chicken, the greater their appreciation of the delicacy, for, says the Thonga, "i nyama!" — "this is meat!" Fowls are extensively used as timhamba, viz., sacrificial offerings. The throat is cut ; a little of the down plucked off the neck is dipped into the blood, and brought close to the mouth for the performance of the *tsu* rite, one of the smaller feathers of the wing (shihluwa), one of the claws, and the beak are tied together and fastened to the wrist, ankle or neck of the person for the sake of whom the offering has been made. (Part VI.) [136] 235 262 235 782

Thongas assert that they have always possessed fowls. "They 235

along the other side and at last reaches the head, muttering the following words : "A ti fe! A ti bole" i. e. "Let them die! Let them rot." Then he prays to his ancestor-gods, asking them to give him many more such beasts. He opens his eyes, and this is the end of the ceremony. 224

As a rule two persons must perform the lurulula rite, first the hunter who has killed the hippopotamus and after him the headman of the batimba village.

The lurulula is the great hunters' rite. There is, however, a second rite to be performed before they can enjoy the flesh of their victim, the *luma*. The luma is the removal of a food taboo by a rite which must accompany the first mouthful taken. It is obligatory for the first fruits, for the food left by a deceased person, etc. (I. p. 146, 394.) This precaution is also necessary in the case of game. The hunter who transfixed the hippopotamus is the first to luma. He takes the diaphragm of the animal (mapfalo), and puts a piece of it into his mouth ; he then plunges into the river, and eats this meat while under water, "as if he were a fish." Having accomplished this feat, he emerges triumphant. His sons and the inmates of his village *luma* after him. They take a portion of the flesh of the neck, called shipelo, from that part of the hippopotamus which pushes the mud in front of it, and which is supposed to be the seat of its strength. This they mix with the mbangulwa medicine and, standing in a line, they all eat a little of it, men, women, and children. All the neighbours assemble : they have smelled out the meat! The portion for the chief is put aside (I. p. 406), as the hippopotamus is very heavily taxed, and must even be cut open by the men of the capital. Then every one receives a piece of the flesh, and luma, either by smearing the sole of the foot with it, or by taking a small live ember and mixing it with the meat. The object of the luma rite is to remove the danger of eating meat to which you are not accustomed : it might "hate you (benga)" and cause colic. The taboo is not very strict, as there is only danger of colic and not of death. (Luma is necessary for elephants, when eating the meat for the first time, but not for lions or panthers. For elephants it is performed by smearing the soles of the feet with the meat.) 224 262

224 they come to him," For this reason hunters strongly assert that should
775 he neglect to perform the rite he will have no success in his future
783 hunting expeditions. A third aim, at least in the case of hippopotamus-
825 hunting, is to overcome the charms of the wizards who ride upon them.

When studying these old hunting rites I had the impression of living for some hours in close contact with primitive humanity, at a time when man, owing to the elementary character of the weapons at his disposal, was almost on the same level as the wild beast and was obliged to display an enormous amount of courage, skill and endurance in order to assert his domination over the animal world and to make it serve his purposes. Since the discovery of gun powder and modern weapons a new era has set in for the hunter. Did not old Viguet assert that now, when an elephant is killed by means of a gun, the nuru is no longer to be feared? Hunting has become for the Bantu of to-day an amusing sport, more profitable indeed but by no means so interesting!

II. *Psinyama-nyamana. The flesh of small animals.*

136 This word which comes from the well-known Bantu word
262 nyama, meat, is a triple diminutive, obtained by the reduplication of the stem, the prefix *psi*, and the suffix *ana*. It means all kinds of food derived from animals of small size, of which the Thongas are very fond.

Anything in any way resembling meat is welcome to them. Amongst Mammalia they specially enjoy certain kinds of rodents, not the domestic rats, but field mice called maphephe and mabuti which boys catch in their traps. Civet cats (nsimba, yi-tin) and wild cats (goya, dji-ma) are not frequently seen near the villages.

136 As regards birds, they eat them all with the few exceptions
222 which I shall shortly mention, from the tiniest sparrow to ducks
262 and Guinea fowls, which they manage to snare. They have no aversion to the lower types of animal : they collect the *matoniane*, large caterpillars belonging to a species of Saturnidae called Cirina similis (Dist), which are found in families on the nkanye tree, during October. By the exercise of a gentle pressure on the hideous creatures, the inside is squeezed out, and the rest is thrown

into a saucepan and boiled, resulting in an indescribable broth of a blackish colour. To see it is quite sufficient... and they enjoy it! Several other kinds of Saturnidae also figure at their feasts : the matomane of nyamari (Bunaea Caffraria), others of a brick red colour (Melanocera Menippe), those of the nhlangula shrub (Gonimbrasia Zambezina), etc. When the cooks go out to split the trunks of old half decayed nkanye trees, from which they get their kindling wood, they are most careful to put on one side the big white larvae of two large Cerambycidae coleoptera (Mallodon Downesii and Plocoederus frenatus, etc.). These enormous white worms (shipungu) will be fried in their own fat, and served up as a tit-bit for the ladies on their return to the village.

The insect world does great injury to the gardens through the agency of its winged members, the *locusts*, and Natives avenge themselves by eating them wholesale. When a swarm of these destructive creatures has alighted somewhere in the evening, and is benumbed by the cool air of the night, the villagers go and collect them in bags or baskets in great quantities. The heads, wings and legs are torn off and the bodies roasted on the embers, or boiled and used as seasoning. When plentiful, the locusts are dried and crushed in mortars to make a much appreciated flour. To our taste, locusts are simply nauseating.

Another favourite dish, the secret of which the Nkunas learnt from their Pedi neighbours, is provided by *the winged imagos of white ants*. At Christmas time, these insects emerge by thousands from the ant-hills of that region. Some are of small size ; the boys introduce grasses, smeared with glue, into the holes from which they come and catch a large number of them by this kind of fishing. They eat the head, which can be heard cracking between their teeth, and throw the bodies into a calabash to season the evening meal. But there is a larger kind which is even more appreciated. The body is whitish, as large as an almond. A hole in the ant-hill, three feet wide by two feet deep, is dug at the spot where the insects are most likely to emerge. An old pot is placed in the clay of the ant-hill at the bottom of this hole. The hole itself is covered with green branches. These curious winged termites, as soon as they have emerged from their retreat,

136 try to fly ; but they soon fall to the ground and you see them
222 running towards each other and shedding their slender transparent
262 wings, so that they remain on the spot, like worms, creeping slowly along, unable to defend themselves, an easy prey for the birds and the *shinana* toads, which have a grand feast on the happy day when winged termites appear! Those which happen to emerge where the hole has been dug, try to escape by flying, but are prevented from doing so by the covering of leaves. They at once fall heavily to the bottom and roll into the pot, which may become quite full in a few hours. The owner of the trap then comes and makes a splendid sauce with its contents! This kind of termite is not met with on the Coast.

I cannot enter into details as to all these more or less questionable foods. (See I, p. 65, the mention of the Shitambela beetle.)

262 Although the caterpillars, coleoptera, larvae, and locusts are universally appreciated, there are other "meats" which appeal to certain individuals or clans, but are disdainfully eschewed by others. For instance the boa is eaten with great gusto by the Rongas and disliked by the Nkunas. The same is true of the big varan lizard. The tortoise is generally eaten, but the Mpfumu boys, who esteem themselves more civilised, reject it. On inquiring why some persons or clans exclude certain kinds of meats which other persons or clans consider delectable, we find that there are two different reasons for this, between which it is important to differentiate. The exclusion is due either to a *nyenya*, viz., disgust, or to a *yila*, viz., a taboo.

1) Owing to *disgust*, some people refuse to eat *pork* : "their hearts fear it," probably because pigs are modern and some people are not yet accustomed to eat their flesh. Zulus reject every
262 kind of fish (nhlampfi) from the same feeling of disgust. Snails
777 are despised by all the Thongas ; it is true that the snail of the
826 country (Natica Wesseliana) is not very tempting, its shell being of a transparent green and its flesh reddish ; moreover it is said to "singita," viz., to bring bad luck to any one meeting with it on the way.

262 But the flesh of some other animals is abstained from, even
826 dreaded, because they *yila*, they are taboo. Thongas have no

totems, and do not exclude certain meats from their diet on account of totemic fears. But they proclaim as taboo some animals: amongst them four kinds of birds, the hawk, the vulture, the crow and the stork, because they are used by magicians to prepare powerful charms; the toad, because when teased its "urine" (murundju) oozes out and is dangerous, causing itch, as is generally believed; a kind of Tenebrionida beetle (Psammodes Bertoloni), called *shifufunu sha paripari*, because it strikes the ground with its abdomen, making a noise represented by the word *baribari*. I could not discover the particular danger feared by the Natives in connection with this beetle, but there must be one; hence the yila. We have already met with the special feminine taboos as regards food (I. p. 183). Women abstain from certain animals, or parts of animals, fearing an evil effect on parturition. Amongst the Nkunas, women are also afraid of the meat of the leopard, the civet-cat, of any animal with paws (psa marubo); they only eat animals which have hoofs (psa masondjo). "The former are wild beasts, things of the hubo (I. p. 311), with a bad smell, food for men" (Mankhelu).

The comparison of *nyenya* and *yila* is interesting, as it may help to explain the origin of certain taboos, which is a very important subject indeed. The nyenya is the feeling of disgust which induces a person to abstain from a given food; in the yila there is, in addition, the dread of a supposed danger connected with the consumption of this food. Thus there is a great difference between the two: the idea of danger does not exist in the nyenya. However, it is quite possible that what was merely a nyenya has evolved, in the course of time, into a real yila or taboo, in which the disgust is no longer the mere individual repulsion for a distasteful food, but has become a social matter, a characteristic custom of a clan, or of a group.

Let me quote two instances which came under my personal notice. Amongst my servants was a young man belonging to the Ngoni clan. The Ba-Ngoni, being of Zulu origin, do not eat fish. Sometimes the cook put shrimps into the ground nut sauce: this was a treat to all the boys, as they are very fond of shrimps and the addition greatly improved the flavour of the dish. But our Ngoni boy, having smelt the "lisuna," used to inquire about the sauce, and if he heard that there

262 784 were shrimps in it, he disdainfully refused to take his share. — "We are Ba-Ngoni! We do not eat fish," he said with disgust. First, shrimps are not fish ; he was "plus royaliste que le roi!" Second, he did not abstain from the sauce because it had an unpleasant flavour ; it was more tasty than ever! But the *social idea* dictated his attitude. He boasted of belonging to a superior race. He was not like these wretched Ba-Thonga who eat fish! It would be lowering himself to partake of such a meal, so he preferred to fast.

I witnessed the same scene when we were distributing cakes to our school children in Lourenço Marques. One of the girls was the daughter of a pure Ronga woman and an Indian Mussulman. She inquired if the cakes had been cooked with lard. The cakes were excellent, and she found them so, nevertheless she refused to eat them if they contained lard, because her father was not allowed to eat pork. It is evident that there is but one step from this clan repulsion, which is still a nyenya, to a definite taboo. Let the boy or girl *fear* that some evil will happen to them, because they have transgressed a sacred rule, and the nyenya will become a yila. Let it be admitted by them that the transgression of the rule may bring death to the family or the clan, and the primitive individual feeling of disgust will be transformed into the most severe collective taboo. I can quote no instance in proof of this evolution, as we have no knowledge of the past history of the taboos. From the psychological point of view, however, this process is quite within the range of possibility.

III. *Fishing.*

226 821 There are no particular restrictions to fishing so long as it is carried on by *hooks*. Any one can go with his boat on the river, the lake, or the sea, and throw his line into the water. The fisherman will then say : "Thu! (not the sacramental tsu, but only an onomatopœia describing the fall of the hook into the water). You! my hook! they eat to their heart's content, people who dwell yonder, where they pound their mealies kneeling down (bugimamusi), there where the khwekhwe and the mhulu are, etc. (names of different kinds of fish)." Afterwards the fisher throws a pinch of tobacco on the spot where his hook

rite may explain why sexual relations are prohibited during all important hunting and fishing operations. With their magic conception of Nature, Bantus do not separate the domain of man from the animal world ; human actions have their immediate effect amongst animals. So if men and women keep strict control over themselves, hippopotami, fish or elephants will not be so wild, and hunters will have more success!

* * *

Meat is either boiled (pseka), or roasted (wosha). When boiled, the broth is called *muru*, (Ro.) or *sheshebo*, (Dj.) the same name that is given to monkey nut sauce or any other seasoning. When roasted, it is either placed on the embers, or skewered on sticks (lihanga) and exposed to the heat of the fire.

The blood of animals (bubendje) is also eaten by most men. However, many fear it (tshaba), not on account of a yila, as if it were taboo, but rather from individual loathing. There are no special laws to be observed as regards bones. The meat of sacrifices, offered in the funeral rites, must be eaten *on the road*, not in the mortuary nor in the guests' villages, as we have already seen.

Meat is welcome, and eagerly sought after in time of famine (ndlala). Should the October rains fail, or the crops be destroyed by grasshoppers, as has been, alas, frequently the case since the first appearance of these pests in August 1894 (1), the Natives are bereft of every resource (2). They dig up all the edges of the

(1) Just at the commencement of the war between the Natives and the Portuguese, grasshoppers arrived in thick clouds in the district of Lourenço Marques. They had not been seen for a great number of years; old folk only recollected having seen them in bygone times. Since then the scourge has never entirely disappeared. The coincidence of their coming and the beginning of hostilities struck the Blacks very forcibly; they often said, at the sight of the grasshoppers: "They announce the armies of Gungunyana."

(2) Here is a pretty couplet with reference to famine:

Nkoadjo wa nhlengana shipopokwana ?

— Lembe ra ndlala a he nguma kusuhe !

The traces of the little antelope (nhlengana) (which one sees in the desert a long way from its lair) recall the year of famine, when one does not stay near home ; (one must go a long way to search for food). See also the several allusions to the year of famine in *Les Chants et Contes des Ba-Ronga*, p. 158, 160 et seq.

262 lakes, to find the tubers of the nenuphars (Nymphea stellata), and
731 cook these indigestible roots (matibu). They have also gone so far as to make flour of the pith of the palm trees (mimale). They disinter the bodies of dead animals, or cram themselves with *masala*, which often engenders serious vomiting. Some eat big Copris beetles.

Such famines were frequent in former times, and special years are still known as having been years of *ndlala*. So, in the chronology of Shinangana (Part IV) the year 1875 (?) was called "the year of the Magadingele famine." On the Coast the Goñhwen famine is still remembered (1). The proximity of a seaport which is easily provisioned, and the possibility of earning money wherewith to buy rice and maize constitute a real advantage which Natives are the first to recognise. In this respect civilisation has rendered signal service to the Thonga commissariat!

266 (1) It does not appear that starvation ever induced Thongas to practise cannibalism on any considerable scale. Cases are known of this happening as when, during the war of 1895, a Ronga killed a man and ate his lungs and kidneys quite raw. He was prosecuted and deported to Mozambique. In the mountains, the Ba-Pedi and Ba-Sutho began to consume human flesh after the raids of Chaka and his generals. They first ate the corpses; then, having acquired a taste for this food, they began to attack travellers, springing out from the caves in the mountains, where they were hiding; they even made organised expeditions in search of men to devour. These cannibals are known by the name of Makhema and caused the Queen of the Bokhaha, Male, to change her residence (J. p. 477).

136 birth to the big green moth with long tails, the Queen Moth. The
815 reason why butterflies, though plentiful in Thongaland, have so little attracted the attention of Natives is, no doubt, the fact that they do not in any way contribute to their food. I have told the story of a woman who tried to force a child to eat a butterfly. (I. p. 445.)

136 *Coleoptera.* The general term for Coleoptera is *Shifufununu*,
825 and it especially applies to the big Tenebrionidae (Psammodes
777 Bertoloni), called *shifufununu sha paripari* (p. 68) and to the large black Carabidae of the Anthia genus which abound on the roads in spring ; one of them, marked with small depressions on the elytra is, for that reason, called the small-pox shifufununu (sha nyedzane). Travelling once with a grown-up Thonga we saw a black Carabida which had four white spots on the back. It was the charming Eccoptoptera mutilloides. I saw him trace a circle round it in the sand saying : "To-day I shall eat to my heart's content!" — "Namunhla ndji ta shura!" — "What are you doing?" I said. — "Oh! This is the *Shurwa-shurwane*," he answered. "When you meet it it is a sign that you will have plenty to eat!" He was mistaken! The real shurwa-shurwane is the Mutilla, a kind of apterous wasp, which has also four white spots on its back, and the beetle we met was so similar to it that he mistook it for a Mutilla ; is it not called mutilloides, pseudo-mutilla? (1)

136 — The Copridæ are called *Gadlen* (dji-ma) and these strange
[753] dung-eaters, which are extremely abundant in the country, are thought to be under the command of the wizards who can introduce
825 them into your body to kill you. The pretty Cerambycidæ,
262 with their long horns, are the *Nwahomurikotjo*, the ox of Rikotcho, or, according to a truer etymology, the ox with horns bent backwards (kotjeka). Children sing an incantation before them, clapping their hands (I, p. 68). Their big white larvae, the *Shipungwana*, dig channels in the stems of nkanye, nkuhlu, mphesa, etc., and are readily eaten as well as the *Shimhukuta*, the

(1) This custom reminds one of the action of Swiss children when they send the ladybird to heaven, to ask God to give them fine weather to-morrow, or of their saying that crushing a golden Carabus on the road will cause rain to fall. Certain Coleoptera are of good omen everywhere! Only, if in Europe they foretell fine weather, in Africa they announce a good meal. The difference is significant!

136 larva of a large Calandra which swarms in the stems of the palm
825 trees of the marsh (p. 4). The *Shitambela*, a big Buprestida
262 (Sternocera Orissa) is roasted by the shepherds and eaten after they have torn off its elytra.

136 *Hymenoptera. Wasps* are called *Mupfi* or *Mupfu* (mu-mi),
755 and are divided into four different classes : the *Mupfu* proper (Belonogaster), the *Tlatlanhongana*, the *Bamaandlopfu*, a grey species, and the *Mumpfundlopfu*, a large black species which burrows in the soil. When someone has been stung by a wasp, the others laugh at him. If he resents being made fun of, they say to him : "Be not angry ; we do this to help you." They are really trying to divert his attention from the pain in order to
136 comfort him. *Bees* are called *Nyoshi* (yin-tin) and are greatly
262 appreciated for their honey (p. 44). Natives know the males
815 (*djongwe*, dji-ma) the larvae *(shipungwa)*, which they eat with as much pleasure as the honey itself. They call the honeycombs *hahla* (dji-ma) or *shihlenga*, the wax *mumpfu* (mu-mi) and the
136 pollen brought by the bees, *nsindjo*. The curious *Mbonga* (yin-tin)
825 *Bee* is worth special mention, owing to the superstitions which are current regarding it, and the part it plays in certain rites (cf. p. 390). This species, which does not sting, digs a narrow passage of two or three feet deep in the soil and excavates a hole of one or two feet broad where it builds its round nest. Natives say that nobody knows what the mbonga does with the earth which it digs out of the cavity in which it makes its nest. No heap of earth is ever seen in the vicinity. The hole is continued under the nest and has no end. It probably extends to subterranean pools where the insects go to drink, — as it is said that no one has ever seen a mbonga drinking from the lake or the well, as the other bees do. Moreover the entrance to a mbonga nest is invisible to the majority of people. It is only certain families who can see it and consequently dig out the precious honey (1). For all these reasons the mbonga is

777 (1) The Libombo family was one of those "which the mbonga loves" (randja). Elias who belongs to it told me that he once paid a visit to one of his neighbours who had just cleaned his village ; he discovered a mbonga hole and said to his friend : "There is a mbonga nest in your village." But the man was unable to find it. Elias then dug as deep as his shoulders and found the nest all surrounded by "calabashes" full of honey. He says that when rain falls the little bees cover the entrance of

136 825 surrounded with a certain mystery, and this is no doubt why its honey is used in the manufacture of the *nyokwekulu*. Its scientific name is Trigona togoensis, var. Junodi (Friese).

136 262 454 787 Amongst the *Mollusca*, a great many are eaten : the *Mbatsana* (yin-tin) of the sea (bivalve shells), *Likatla* (li-tin) of the lakes, and the *Hwaru* (yi-tin), oysters of the Tembe shore. The land snails are called *Humba* (yi-tin) ; the big ones (Achatina Lamarkiana) are used as safes for the deposit of pounds sterling and are often buried in the huts ; hence the expression *Humba ya bupfundji*, shell of riches! The smaller ones, resembling our snails (Aerope caffra), are rarer and it is considered a bad omen to meet with them on the road. — "Where you go you will hear cries of mourning!" Their name is *Shikumbukwane*. The slugs are called *Holokompfa* (yin-tin) and the smaller snails, *Shihumbanyana*, diminutive of *humba*.

136 825 262 *Fish* all have names, but having never dwelt in the close vicinity of the sea, I have not learnt them. I know the *Mfungwe* (yi-tin) the fish whose mouth ends in a saw, the *Mangapfi* (dji-ma), the name of a kind of hawk given to the flying fish of Delagoa Bay, the *Nhempfane* (yi-tin) found in the fresh water ponds, the *Ntima* (yi-tin) the barbel, the black fish which must not be eaten by lovers before their marriage (I, p. 107).

136 *Amphibia*. *Ntlambya* (mu-mi) is the ordinary frog (Rana oxyrhynca) whose young are known and called *Shilungula* ; another black species is the *Rebya* (dji-ma) ; the tree-frogs are called *Shilungwalungwana* (Rappia marmorata and argus) ; the toad *Kele* (dji-ma), Bufo regularis ; the famous Breviceps mossambicus is *Shinana* (I. p. 87) the great warrior of the tales (p. 221).

136 825 *Reptilia*. There are many kinds of *Lizards*. The common kind found in the houses, under the verandas is the *Mponondjo* (mu-mi) (Mabuia striata), ; the Lygodactylus capensis, found on the hills, is the *Nkolombya* (mu-mi) ; the little Agama

777 the hole with their wings to prevent water from inundating the nest. When it lasts too long they quickly go down to close the entrance of the nest ; the water then leaks down the pipe which descends into the interior of the earth. He added : "If a man does not belong to a family which "knows" the mbonga and if he happens to find a nest he will meet with misfortune ; one of his relatives will die. The bees will bring him ill-luck (singita)."

aculeata, which runs on the sand, *Shipyindji* or *Shihonokamahlo*, the one which gazes at you ; the large gheko, Agama atricollis, with a head of which the grey colour can change into blue, *Galagala* or *Phululu* (dji-ma) (I. p. 173) the grey one, which hides itself in dark places, in hollow stems or under roofs is the *Hokokwana* (dji-ma) (Hemidactylus grenatus) ; it is said that when this lizard sucks at the breast of a human being, it is impossible to remove it, and the only means of getting rid of it is to go and suckle a dog! 136 825

But the most curious lizard of these countries, that which most strikes the Native imagination is the Chameleon (Chameleon Petersii), *Lumpfana* (dji-ma). Herd boys throw ground tobacco into its mouth to avenge themselves for the bad turn it did mankind when it lingered on the road and came too late to bring the message of eternal life (as we shall learn in a moment). It is used by certain magicians to discover thieves. They smear a chameleon with a drug which makes it turn white and then let it go : "Then the thief, wherever he may be, also turns white, and if he does not confess his theft, he dies!" 136 825 789

The flesh of none of these lizards is eaten, but that of the big Varan which lives near the rivers, *Kwahle* (dji-ma), is considered a delicacy. The kwahle is said to be very hard to kill. About *Crocodiles* (*nguenya*, yin-tin) all sorts of stories are told. When one of them has been killed, the contents of its stomach are carefully preserved ; Thongas assert that each year, when the rains begin, crocodiles swallow a stone, so that their age can be known by counting them. These stones are taboo ; for a subject to swallow them is a cause of death, but one of them is chosen, treated with certain drugs and swallowed by the chief to warn him of his death, as we have already seen (I, p. 393). Crocodile stones play an important part in divination. (See Part VI. Ch. III. D). 136 825 262 787

Tortoises, whose generic name is *Mfutju* (yin-tin), are eaten and also used in the divinatory art, as we shall see. Some lake tortoises are called *Gamba* (dji-ma) and sea tortoises *Hasi* (dji-ma).

Snakes (nyoka, yin-tin) are generally dreaded and considered dangerous, although many kinds are quite harmless. The 825 136

825 *Shipyahla* (Ro.), *Mhiri* (yin-tin, Dj.) is the big, lazy, grey puff adder,
136 which creeps along the ground, and is one of the most venomous kinds, together with the *Mhamba* (yin-tin), a slender species, very swift and often found on trees. "When you meet a mhiri," say the Nkunas, "throw a little earth on it and you will soon see
[752] its brother!" Of course magicians have plenty of drugs to cure snake bites. For this purpose they use the head of the adder roasted and pulverised. *Shibatlankombe*, (Naja nigricollis), "the one which carves a spoon" is the name of a species which
[762] curves its neck till it looks like a spoon. The *Hhlaru* (yin-tin) is the boa. It is eaten. Another member of the Clapidae family is the *Likure*, a pretty greyish violet species (Causus Lichtensteinii).
[769] Amongst the harmless snakes are those little blue ones, *Shihundje* (Dendrophis subcarinatus), which are considered as emissaries of the ancestor spirits. I shall mention them again later on. The *Nsoma* (yin-tin), very common and harmless, is probably Dispholidus typus. Some small ones, not larger than worms, but hard and shining like metal, are called *Tumbi-tumbi*, because they hide (tumba) in the sand. One of them seems to be Xenocalamus bicolor.

825 There are also the legendary snakes of the Thongas. On the
777 Coast they speak of the *Buwumati*, which dwells in the lakes and is invisible. It is only heard crying "bu-wu-bu-wu" when rain is falling, and its voice is as loud as that of an antelope. If it shows itself to a traveller, it is a very bad sign. The story is told of a man who came back from consulting a bone-thrower. He saw the buwumati lying on the ground, its coils extending to a great distance, closing all the passages. He retraced his steps, but after three days he died. In the Transvaal, this dreadful snake is called *Shimhemhemhe*, the name being an imitation of its cry.
825 This superstition is perhaps of Pedi origin, but it has been accepted by the Nkunas. The shimhemhemhe dwells in certain dark woody ravines on the slopes of the Drakensberg mountains. If anyone imprudently penetrates there, the snake pursues him, creeping along the branches above, and bites him on the top of the head. A man met with it once on the way to Thabina; he saw it on the road, its head raised, a shining head of two colours. There

Regular acts of worship are performed also at the
burial (I. p. 142), at the *crushing of the hut* (I. p. 158-163), on the 782
days of *mahloko* (I. p. 215), and at the *adjudication of the inheritance* 765
(I. p. 208). 262

I have already mentioned the stringent taboo in regard to the victims killed in these sacrifices. The portions distributed amongst the different relations must not be eaten either in the village of the deceased, or in those of the various visitors. This meat must be roasted on the road, and eaten on the spot, and it is likewise taboo to season it in any way. The inhabitants of the deceased's village can eat the meat boiled, but it is prohibited to add ground-nuts to the broth.

These are the great family sacrifices, in which the uterine 782
nephews play their curious part, and on the occasion of which family matters are brought up and settled. They play a most important part in the life of the family, and I have therefore described them at length, when treating of the social life of the tribe, as religion and social life are here intimately united. There is therefore no need for me to add much more regarding them here. With their clearly established and typical ritual they form the most definite and settled element of the religious life of the tribe.

Rangane asserts that another offering is regularly performed in the Maluleke district. On the first occasion of the *cooking of the new mealies*, each headman prepares a little of the flour, takes a spoonful of it, and throws it away, praying at the same time to the Ba-Nyai spirits, i. e., the gods of the Ba-Nyai, who have been conquered by the Malulekes. He calls this "magandjelo ya ku ñwantseka," i. e., "sacrifice tasted and thrown away." This is evidently to propitiate the gods, who were the first owners of the country and who might harm or destroy the invaders. Compare p. 377 the respect shown by Mahazule to the Libombo sacred wood, and also the curious request of the Samaritans, II Kings. XVII.

Special Family Sacrifices. By these, I mean particularly those 782
offered *in cases of disease.* The bones having revealed that the 755
disease is caused by the gods (and not by wizards, nor by Heaven, nor by contamination, which are three other possibilities), and also that it comes from such and such a god, a god of bitterness, or a god

case of ordinary medicine-men. Mboza, who was the favourite of Nwatshulu, was entrusted with the organisation of the feast. He stood at the main entrance of the village and welcomed the exorcised coming with their empty calabashes ; on their arrival, each of them gave two shillings, or half a crown, or a mat, or a fowl for the master ; this was their annual fee. Next day they all gathered fuel and burnt the drugs in broken pots, two or three mathwazana around each fire. Then they all inhaled the smoke through reeds, and absorbed the froth of the phuphumana and psekamafura decoction from the gobo basin. In the evening the old inhabitants began to grind the carbonised roots, and Mboza filled the calabashes of the disciples with the new protective medicines, after which dancing began, each of the exorcised singing his own song as well as the universally known refrains, such as : "Vuka Mungoni," etc. This was a great day of rejoicing! 756

As already pointed out, great rivalry exists between these schools. Professional hatred is carried to its extreme limits amongst magicians : they not only *test* their colleagues, entering their huts during the night, but they steal each other's drugs. I have been told how Sindondondo overcame Khongosa. Sindondondo was a wonderful man, dwelling on the Western border of the Nkomati, at Shifukundju. He had disappeared for two or three years, and was regarded as dead, but he unexpectedly reappeared, saying that he had lived at the bottom of the sea during the whole time. There he had not eaten anything ; he was like a fish. The chiefs of that country, under the water, had given him his great drug called *ndzundzu*, and he returned home bringing with him a bunch of the precious roots. His people welcomed him and made a feast on his return. He then became a great magician, and exorcised a number of people. He and his one wife were the sole inhabitants of his village ; he was very particular as regards his food, eating only mealies of the preceding year, and drinking no beer. (The exorcised often observe special, individual alimentary taboos.) His forked pole was outside, on his hubo, not in the hut, and when he went on a journey, he ordered a neighbour to keep watch over his drugs and his fowls. Should some other man try to enter his [262]